

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Applicant has amended Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 19, 20 and 22 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. As a result, Claims 1-23 should meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-17 and 19-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brey et al. (U.S. Patent 5,274,646).

Independent Claims 1, 9 and 20 have been amended to recite "wherein the ECC values are not accessible from outside the semiconductor memory". Support for this amendment is found in the specification as originally filed in paragraph [0110]. No new matter is added.

This recited element of independent Claims 1, 9, and 20 was previously set forth in dependent Claim 18 (which has been canceled in the present Amendment). Note that dependent Claim 18 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Brey et al.. For this reason, Claims 1, 9 and 20 as amended are not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Brey et al.

Note that Brey et al. specifically teach "Circuit 13 error checks each DU + ECC group and passes it to its requestor". (Bray et al., Col. 6, lines 50-52.) Thus, Brey et al. explicitly teaches that ECC values are accessible outside of the described device. (See also, Bray et al., Fig. 1, which illustrates external access to ECC values.) This is not surprising, because Brey et al. is not concerned

with "transparent error correction" as recited in the preamble of Claims 1, 9 and 20.

For these reasons, independent Claims 1, 9 and 20 are not unpatentable in view of Brey et al. Claims 2-8, 10-18 and 21-23, which depend from Claims 1, 9 and 20, respectively are not unpatentable in view of Brey et al. for at least the same reasons as Claims 1, 9 and 20.

Independent Claim 19, which recites "the memory interface does not provide direct access to the ECC values", is not unpatentable in view of Brey et al. for at least the same reasons as Claims 1, 9 and 20.

In addition, Claim 23 recites "all multiple-bit errors in the test data pattern and the corresponding ECC value are 100% controllable (excitable) and observable (detectable) via the test data patterns". As described above, Brey et al. requires access to the ECC values, suggesting that not all multiple-bit errors are observable via the test data patterns. For this additional reason, Claim 23 is not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Brey et al.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-23 are pending in the present application. Reconsideration and allowance of these claims is requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is invited to call the undersigned at (925) 895-3545.

Respectfully submitted,



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